

## Two new migrant species for Bedfordshire

During 1995 two species were caught in the Rothamsted Insect Survey trap at Cockayne Hatley in Bedfordshire (RIS site 336; O.S. ref. TL253494) which are new for the county. On the night of 3/4 August a specimen of the White Point *Mythimna albipuncta* D. & S. was recorded. This species was reported from the Isles of Scilly on 5/6 August (Hale & Hicks, *Ent. Rec.* **107**: 271-272) and therefore the Bedfordshire individual may have been part of a much larger immigration at that time. The other new species was the pyralid *Margaritia sticticalis* (Linn.) on 18/19 July. Although thought to be extinct as a resident in Britain it is known as a rare migrant (Parsons, M.S., 1993, *JNCC UK Nature Conservation, No. 11*), and 1995 seems to have been an exceptionally good year for it in England, possibly brought in from eastern Europe on the easterly winds. The other species of note this year from the Cockayne Hatley trap was a specimen of *Ostrinia nubilalis* (Hb.) on 1/2 August. This is only the fourth recorded occurrence of the species in the county, although it was thought to be breeding at one locality until the site was destroyed.

The 1994 records for Bedfordshire microlepidoptera have just been published (Manning, D.V., 1995, *Bedfordshire Naturalist* **49**: 62) and half of the 16 new records for the county were also from the Cockayne Hatley trap. Of particular interest was a specimen of the "Notable B" pyralid *Scoparia ancipitella* (La Harpe) between 2-8 August.— IAN WOIWOD, South Lodge, Cockayne Hatley, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2EA and DAVID MANNING, 27 Glebe Rise, Sharnbrook, Bedford MK44 1JB.

## An unusual abundance of *Bledius germanicus* Wagner (Col.: Staphylinidae) inland during 1994

On 28 June 1994, whilst running five m.v. traps at the Essex Wildlife Trust's nature reserve at Rushy Mead, on the border of Hertfordshire/North Essex vice-counties, in the company of other members of the Bishops Stortford Moth Group, I was surprised to note the arrival of several hundred rather striking red and black staphylinid beetles. The "invasion" commenced at about midnight and continued for about an hour, with all five traps yielding good numbers of the species. Several examples were collected and these were later very kindly confirmed as *Bledius germanicus* by Alex Williams. I returned home to check my garden trap, only a short distance away, at about 02.00 hours on 29 June; this trap too contained very large numbers of the same species, though perhaps fewer than at Rushy Mead. In spite of searching and repeated light trapping, *B. germanicus* has not been seen before, or since, at either site.

According to Joy (1932, *A Practical Handbook of British Beetles*. Witherby), who does not include this particular species, members of the genus *Bledius* are frequently gregarious, "often being found in large numbers

in very restricted areas". He continues to inform the reader that they burrow into damp sand or mud, either on the flat or in banks, closing the mouth of the burrow with a small heap of excavated substrate. Hodge & Jones (1995, *New British Beetles: species not in Joy's practical handbook*. BENHS), list this species but give no ecological data. Sheila Wright (*Ent. Rec.* **107**: 226) in recording this beetle as new to Nottinghamshire from two females taken at light in 1989 stated that this is a coastal species, associated fairly strictly with mud that has a high salt content adding that she had been informed by Peter Hammond that flying individuals are sometimes intercepted at some distance from salt water. In spite of this I can trace only one inland record at distance from the sea, apart from the Nottinghamshire record, given by Walker (1932, *Ent. Mon. Mag.*) for Oxford, also cited by Dr Wright, though three examples were taken at m.v. light on a single night in July 1995 by Sir John Dacie at Wimbledon, Surrey (*antea*: 71).

Whilst the coastal salt-marshes of Essex may be expected to have healthy populations of this species, the nearest lies some considerable distance from the Bishops Stortford area which must surely count as being "inland". On the other hand, Rushy Mead is a former sewage works, and the soil here has a high content of phosphates and nitrates; the beetle could perhaps have bred here, though this seems rather unlikely. The sudden occurrence of huge numbers at an inland site may, on the other hand, suggest an influx from somewhere else and it is interesting to note in this context that on the same evening I also took the fourth British example of the Tortricoid moth *Eucosma metzneriana* Tr. at around 22.30 hours (*Ent. Rec.* **107**: 154-155). Rushy Mead lies in the Stort Valley and if there is any reason at all to believe that valleys may attract more immigrants, generally, than higher ground this is borne out by the lower numbers in my garden which is indeed at the top of a hill to the side of the valley. If the beetles had bred at Rushy Mead, or at another nearby part of the Stort Valley, then their dispersal away from the site (presumably if they reached my garden then they must have been spread all over the town) is in itself of interest.— C.W. PLANT, 14 West Road, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 3QP.

#### EDITORIAL NOTE:

The above note, of which the author has kindly allowed me a preview, is of much interest in greatly extending our knowledge of the recent phenomenon of *Bledius* spp., chiefly *germanicus*, at m.v. light traps well inland. The huge numbers recorded at Rushy Mead (but only in 1994) are, of course, quite without precedent and truly extraordinary, very far exceeding anything of the sort I have seen here at Charlton – where the species was again present at my lamp last summer (1995), as well as the few preceding years, in some plenty along with *B. opacus* (Block) also in fair numbers. The latter is a not uncommon inland species but I have never seen it here before 1994. The two